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ABSTRACT

Several articles of interest to teachers of English as a second language (ESL) are included. The Institute of Languages at the University of New South Wales describes "Projects for a 'Survival' English Course for Overseas Students." Howard Tucker and Barbara Harley discuss an educational series of 24 television programs for immigrant children in "Waterloo Street: TV Language Series for Schools." In "'What Is It?' A Multipurpose Language Teaching Technique," Paul Nation describes a classroom activity designed to develop descriptive skills. F. J. Tyrrell offers a brief description of "The End-of-Course Evening Continuation Class Test." In conclusion, Jean Ireland reports on a teacher training workshop run by Brian Abbs. (JB)

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Vol 4 No. 2 May 1979

TEFL TESL NEWSLETTER

ED201172

FOR THE INTERCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND IDEAS ON THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN AUSTRALIA

CONTENTS

Editorial Institute of Languages, UNSW	Projects for a 'survival' English course for overseas students	1
Howard Tucker and Barbara Harley	*Waterloo Street*: TV language series for schools	17
Paul Nation	'What is it?' A multipurpose language teaching technique	23
F J Tyrrell	The end-of-course evening continuation class test	34
Jean Ireland	The Brian Abbs workshop	36

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EDITORIAL

Those of us who were privileged to hear *Brian Abbs* earlier this year no doubt came to a variety of conclusions about what this eminent British materials writer had to say to us. One such comment reaches us in this issue, from *Jean Ireland*. We invite other readers to send us their impressions.

More particularly for teachers of children, we include information on the ABC's TV language series *Waterloo Street*.

Again, in accordance with our policy of reprinting some of the best of overseas offerings, we include an article by *Paul Nation* from the US journal *Forum*.

There is also a comment from *Frank Tyrrell* of Victoria, on the Commonwealth Department of Education's latest version of the end-of-course test for evening class students.

From the Institute of Languages at the University of New South Wales we offer some useful project material designed to enable overseas students to cope with situations in which they find themselves in Australia. This will be of interest to teachers of migrants also.

PROJECTS FOR A 'SURVIVAL' ENGLISH COURSE FOR OVERSEAS STUDENTS

The Institute of Languages, University of New South Wales

The Institute of Languages has a diversity of courses. The material referred to here has been used on our *English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students*. These students fall into three categories:

(a) Those who intend to study at a tertiary institution in Australia and are required to undertake an English course prior to commencement of studies. This can be for three, six, nine or twelve months.

(b) Those in Australia to study English and then return to their own countries, usually to continue tertiary study there. The period of English study is usually nine months.

(c) Those sponsored by A.D.A.B. to learn English and then return to their jobs in their own countries. This sponsorship is for nine months.

In addition, most students have learned some English in their own country but the concentration has been on structure and the reading and writing skills, which means they are unable to cope with the wide range of interpersonal functions required in oral discourse.

Thus, most of our students have already attained matriculation level and are potential university students either in Australia or their own country. All will be temporary residents in Australia for *at least* nine months. To cope with such a range of needs, our course operates on a ten week modular system such that each module is self-sufficient but progress from one to another is possible. Students in categories (b) and (c) take part in a 'survival' course as their first module, as do any students from category (a) who will study English for longer than three months. As the primary need of such students is in the area of academic skills, students only learning English for three months must concentrate on these skills - unfortunately at the expense of their more immediate social/survival needs.

The aim of the 'survival' module is to enable students to cope adequately with the essential daily situations in which they find themselves in Australia. As can be seen from the list of contents, this goes beyond the basic minimum of the language of buying, travelling etc., as one would find in a phrase book and equips students to handle all aspects of their life in Australia. As our students have differing language abilities on arrival, they are loosely graded, but the same conceptual areas are dealt with at all levels. For students with less background in English, fewer choices from within the language system are dealt with, while for those with a good basic knowledge of 'structural' English, a wider range of language options is presented.

A general outline of the contents of the course follows.

PROJECTS FOR A 'SURVIVAL' ENGLISH COURSE

For students recently arrived in Australia, we conduct a 'survival' course to enable them to cope adequately with the essential daily situations in which they find themselves. The general outline of the contents of the course is as follows:

WEEK 1:	University Campus Orientation	Asking for information Finding places/directions
WEEK 2:	Shopping, Part 1	Shopping centres Supermarkets Taste/flavours/packaging Cafeteria - ordering/identification
WEEK 3:	Transport in Sydney	Buying tickets Reading timetables Reading maps Planning trips
WEEK 4:	Post Office, Banking & Telephones (introduction to telephones only)	Sending letters/parcels Making international calls Sending telegrams Use of telephone book Filling out forms, e.g. cheques, withdrawal forms, telephone application
WEEK 5:	Medical	Making appointment by telephone, in person Visit to doctor/referral to specialist Completing Medibank forms Recognition of medicines/poison bottles etc. First aid instructions

WEEK 6: Shopping, Part 2	Buying clothing/furniture/household goods Returning faulty goods/consumer rights Sizes/washing instructions/fabrics/ labels
WEEK 7: Leisure, Part 1 (In Sydney)	Phone calls, e.g. cinemas/restaurants/ invitations to party; TAA - arrival times Examination of TV programmes in newspapers - how to read Radio programmes Eating customs - table manners Amusement section of paper
WEEK 8: Accommodation	Use of newspapers to find ads - interpretation Phone calls - estate agent/private rental House contents - lease/bond Inspection of a house Asking for permission
WEEK 9: Leisure, Part 2 (Holidays)	Use of tourist brochures Making booking - in person/by phone Breaking into/starting/ending conversations Safety in Australia, e.g. bushfires/ snakebite Letter of thanks
WEEK 10: Circus of Events	Revision of all areas

One afternoon of each week is set aside for students to get out into the community, use the language they have been exposed to and practised in class and discover useful practical information for themselves. To accomplish this, they are given a fairly detailed project. After the initial two weeks, when all students do the same projects, each class is divided into four groups (each group has three or four students in it) and each group has a different task. In this way, we try to minimise the problem of the less motivated student who merely copies from the others. On the day following the project activity, each group reports its findings to the other groups. Rather than a class activity in which those not reporting lose interest, we have chosen to have groups report on a one-to-one basis so that every student is involved. It is possible to extend this further so that student 1 in group A reports to student 1 in group B who then reports group A's findings to group C etc. This further ensures understanding and participation. The projects are set out in full.

PROJECT 1 (PART A): THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

AIM: To find the University's facilities.

Find these places on the University Campus. Walk around the University. ASK people to help you. Mark the numbers on the map. (Students receive a copy of a map of the campus of the University of New South Wales).

1. Institute of Languages (Main Office)
2. Library
3. Science Theatre
4. International House
5. Commonwealth Bank (Lower Campus)
6. Asian Food Bar
7. Bus stop for the city
8. Shops: chemist, newsagent, barber, David Jones
9. Student Health Centre
10. Unisearch House
11. Squash courts
12. Tennis courts

PROJECT 1 (PART B): THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

AIM: To discover some of the activities at the University.
Find the answers to these questions. Write them down.

1. Name all the faculties at this University.
2. How many live-in colleges are there?
3. What department is situated in the Australian Capital Territory?
4. What is the University Union? Who can become members? What services does the Union provide for students?
5. What is *Opunka?*
6. Where can you get enrolment forms for the University?
7. Where is the University bookshop?
8. How many day students are enrolled at the University?
9. In what year was the University opened?
10. What fees must students pay?
11. What are the names of other universities in Sydney?
12. What faculties offer part-time courses?
13. How many years of full-time study are needed to get
    (a) a B.A. (Hons)
    (b) a B.Sc. (Pass)
    (c) an LL.B.?
14. What is the prerequisite for
    (i) an M.A. (Hons)
    (ii) a Ph.D. in Engineering?
15. What is the duration of
    (a) an M.Sc. (Pass)
    (b) a Ph.D. in Economics?

PROJECT 2: SUPERMARKETS

AIM: To become familiar with Australian supermarkets and discover what they sell.
In your group visit ONE supermarket and find answers to these questions. ASK people to help you. WRITE the answers.

1. What different *types* of tea does the supermarket sell?
2. What different *types* of coffee does the supermarket sell?
3. What different *types* of oil does the supermarket sell?
4. Go to the spice shelves. Are there any spices you need for your own national cooking? What are they? (Write their *English* names).
5. Find the names of TWO different biscuits - one sweet and one savoury. How do you know? Copy the name and brand from the label.
6. Where can you find
   (a) non-dairy creamer
   (b) Vegemite?

   If you cannot find them, ask someone to show you.
7. These are well-known brand names in Australia. What are the products?

OMO	SUNLIGHT PERSONAL	SMITH'S
MUM	COLGATE	GILLETTE
ORCHY	SUNLONG	ARNOTT'S
	GOLDEN CIRCLE	

PROJECT 3: TRANSPORT IN SYDNEY

AIM: To discover how to use all forms of public transport in Sydney.

Find the answers to these questions. Write them down.

ONLY ANSWER THE QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP.

GROUP 1 - TAXIS

1. What is the taxi company which serves your area? What is its phone number?
2. What is 'flag fall' and how much is it?
3. What is the rate per km?

4. In a taxi, do you
   (a) pay the fare on the meter
   OR (b) bargain with the driver
   OR (c) pay the fare on the meter plus a tip?
5. A taxi can show three signs on the roof. What are they? What do they mean?
6. You want to travel by taxi. There are THREE ways to find a cab. What are they?
7. If you want to drive a taxi, how can you get a licence?

GROUP 2 - BUSES

1. Who runs most bus services in Sydney?
2. Where can you get a bus timetable?
3. Get a bus timetable for buses
   (a) from the University to the City
   (b) from the University to Railway Square
   (c) from your house to Circular Quay
   (d) from the University to the Airport.
4. There are TWO free bus services in Sydney. Where do they go? What are their numbers?
5. What is a 'Day Rover'? How much does it cost?
6. How much is a weekly ticket from the University to Martin Place? Where can you buy one?
7. How much is the full fare from the University to Martin Place?

GROUP 3 - TRAINS

1. Who runs all train services in Sydney?
2. Where can you get a train timetable?
3. Get a timetable for trains
   (a) on the City Circle
   (b) from Central to North Sydney
   (c) from Central to Katoomba.
4. What is a 'Day Rover'? How much does it cost?
5. How much is a weekly ticket from Central to North Sydney? Where can you buy one?
6. How much is the single full fare from Central to North Sydney?
7. The government is building a new railway line. What is it called? Where will it go?

GROUP 4 - HARBOUR TRANSPORT

1. Who runs most harbour transport in Sydney?
2. There are two types of harbour transport. What are they?
3. Where can you get a timetable for them?
4. Get a timetable.
5. All harbour transport leaves from Circular Quay. Give the Jetty number for journeys to
   (a) Manly
   (b) Taronga Park Zoo
   (c) Luna Park.
6. How much is a return fare (student concession) to
   (a) Manly
   (b) Taronga Park Zoo
   (c) Luna Park?
7. You do not get tickets for harbour transport. When you pay your money, what does the attendant give you? What do you do with it?

PROJECT 4: POST OFFICE, BANKING AND TELEPHONES

(GENERAL INTRODUCTION ONLY)

AIM: To learn how to use facilities offered by Australia Post, Banks and Telecom.

Only answer the questions for your group.

GROUP 1 - POST OFFICE. Go to your local Post Office and find out the following. Write down your answers.

1. What hours is the Post Office open? What are the mail collection times?
2. Which of these services do Post offices provide?
   (a) sending money overseas
   (b) sending telegrams
   (c) making international phone calls
   (d) cashing travellers cheques.

3. How much does it cost to send a parcel weighing less than 2 kg. to your country? Will the Post Office sell insurance for this parcel?
4. What is a registered letter? How much does it cost to send one from Sydney to Canberra?
5. If you change your address, how can the Post Office re-address mail for you? How much does the Post Office charge for this service?
6. How much does a telegram to your country cost? Collect some telegram forms.
7. What is Surface Air Lift? Can you use this service to your country?

GROUP 2 - TELEPHONES. Use a Sydney Telephone Directory.

1. List the FIVE MAIN sections in the phone book.
2. What is S.T.D.? When is it used? What is the S.T.D. code for Canberra?
3. What are the telephone numbers of the following:
   (a) Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs
   (b) Department of Consumer Affairs
   (c) J.B. Dawson
   (d) O.P.S.M. (What is it?)
   (e) Macquarie University?
4. In the Yellow Pages, find the name, address and phone number of a photographer who takes passport-sized photographs.
5. Go to a Telecom Australia Office or a Post Office.
   Find out the cost of a three-minute call to your country.
6. How do you apply for a phone in your flat? How much does this cost?
7. How much is the telephone rental per year?
8. Where can you pay a telephone bill?

GROUP 3 - BANKING. Go to your bank.

1. What TWO banks are on the University Campus? You can't send money to your country from one of these banks. Why? Where must you go?

2. How can you send money to your country? How much can you send each year?
3. What is a Savings Account?
4. What is a Current Account?
5. Why should you write 'not negotiable' on a cheque?
6. You want to buy something in a department store. If you want to pay by cheque, what must you show the shop assistant?
7. If you lose your cheque book or savings book, what should you do?
8. Get some deposit slips and some withdrawal slips. You must show the class how to fill them in.
9. Get a specimen cheque. You must show the class how to write a cheque.

PROJECT 5: MEDICAL

AIM: To become familiar with medical facilities in Sydney. (Your class will be divided into four groups. You must then find answers to the questions for your group.)

GROUP A - THE CHEMIST

1. What is a chemist's?
2. What are the following products used for?
   (a) valium
   (b) penicillin
   (c) Codral/Disprin/Panadol
   (d) Benadryl/Strepsils/Vicks inhaler
   (e) Kao-magma/Alka-seltzer
   (f) Laxettes
   (g) bandaids
   (h) Savlon
   (i) Cool-charm
3. What is a prescription? Do you need a prescription to get the products in Question 2? Which of these products can you buy in other shops?
4. What other services does a chemist provide?
5. Go to the Union Pharmacy and a Soul Pattinson Pharmacy and compare the prices of the following items:

   BAYGON — VITAMIN C TABLETS (100)

   TOOTHPASTE (125g.) — AN ANTI-DANDRUFF SHAMPOO

GROUP B - MEDICAL SERVICES

1. Who runs the ambulance service? How do you call an ambulance? How much does an ambulance cost? Describe the insurance scheme available for the ambulance service.
2. How do you get medical help in an emergency if your doctor is not available? Is there a charge for this service?
3. What is Outpatients? Who can use Outpatients? When? Where is the nearest Outpatients to where you live?
4. What is the Family Planning Association? Where is the nearest clinic to where you live?

GROUP C - ALTERNATIVE MEDICAL SERVICES

1. What are natural drugs? Where can you buy them? Give some examples? What can they cure?
2. What are 'health foods'? Where can you buy them? What is unprocessed bran? Why is it good for health?
3. What is a chiropractor? What does he do? Does he have to be specially trained?
4. What is acupuncture? Is this treatment available in Australia?

GROUP D - HEALTH INSURANCE

1. Go to a Medibank Office. Obtain a claim form. Fill it in. You will be required to show the class how to complete a claim form.
2. What is a referral note? Why do you need one?
3. What are the other health insurance schemes available?
4. Does Medibank have dental and optical insurance? How much extra do you pay for this?

PROJECT 6: SHOPPING - PART 2

AIM: To compare costs of furnishing a flat. Your class will be divided into five groups. You must find the answers to the questions for your group.

GROUP A - SHOPPING FOR A PARTY. Plan a menu for a student party with dishes from your own country. Write a detailed shopping list. Buy the food. List the shops you bought the food from.

GROUP B - HOUSEHOLD GOODS

1. You have rented a furnished flat. Write a list of household goods you need. Go to Woolworths or Coles and find the cost of these goods.
2. You have rented a furnished flat. Write a list of household goods you need. Go to a Department Store and find the cost of these goods.

GROUP C - FURNITURE

1. You have rented an unfurnished two-bedroom flat. Write a list of furniture you need. Go to Pabs Furniture Rentals and find the cost of renting this furniture.
2. You have rented an unfurnished two-bedroom flat. Write a list of furniture you need. Go to a second-hand furniture shop and find the cost of buying this furniture.

PROJECT 7: LEISURE - PART 1

AIM: To find how to spend leisure time in Sydney. (Your class will be divided into four groups. You must find the answers to the questions for your group.)

GROUP A - RESTAURANTS. Give the name and address for restaurants serving each of the following types of food: (Use a phone book)

CHINESE
JAPANESE
LEBANESE
PERSIAN
VIETNAMESE
INDONESIAN
KOREAN
MALAYSIAN
THAI

What is the price of a typical meal for two? Do any of them have a take-away service? What clothing would be suitable to wear at each - casual or formal?

GROUP B - A DAY TOUR IN SYDNEY. Imagine a friend of yours has come to Sydney for one day. He wants to go sight-seeing in Sydney. Make up a programme so that your friend can see:

SYDNEY HARBOUR, THE ROCKS
KINGS CROSS
TARONGA PARK ZOO
OBSERVATION DECK - AUSTRALIA SQUARE
THE INDIAN TEA CENTRE - FOR LUNCH

Your friend's plane leaves Mascot at 2100. Check-in time is 30 minutes. He arrives at the domestic terminal on the first TAA flight from Melbourne. Remember your friend doesn't have much money. Neither do you! Try to calculate the cheapest fares.

GROUP C - A WEEKEND IN SYDNEY. Imagine a friend of yours has come to Sydney for three days. This is not his first visit. You want to show him as much of Sydney as possible, take him to the theatre, restaurants, etc.

You will need:

(a) The amusement section in Saturday's *Herald*.

(b) *This Week in Sydney*.

Where did you get *This Week in Sydney?* How much does it cost? Now plan a weekend for you and your friend and estimate the total cost.

GROUP D - AMUSEMENTS IN SYDNEY

What are the following?
Where can you see them?
How much does it cost?
Are there any student concessions?

What identification do you need?
What are the opening times?
How can you get there from the University?

OLD SYDNEY TOWN, THE ROCKS
MUSEUM OF APPLIED ARTS AND SCIENCES
PADDY'S MARKET
THE PYLON LOOKOUT
ANY FILM AT THE HOYTS ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE.

PROJECT 8: ACCOMMODATION

AIM: To learn how to rent accommodation in Sydney. (Each class will be divided into four groups. You must then find answers to the questions for your group.)

GROUP A - RENTING A FLAT FROM AN AGENT. You must go to a real estate agent and find out the following:

1. How much does a two-bedroom flat cost in the area?
2. Is it close to the beach/transport/shopping centre?
3. Is parking space available? If so, is it under cover?
4. Are there laundry facilities? Is there a hot water service?
5. Are you allowed to share, or have pets?
6. Must you pay a bond? How much is it?
7. Must you sign a lease? How long is it for? How much notice must you give?
8. Who pays for gas and electricity?
9. Is there a telephone connected?
10. Is there heating?

GROUP B - FINDING ADVERTISEMENTS FOR ACCOMMODATION. You must find examples of flats or rooms to let in each of the following places and write down one advertisement from each:

1. University Union notice board
2. daily newspaper
3. local newspaper

4. in a real estate agent's window
5. shop window or supermarket

What do the abbreviations in the advertisements mean?

GROUP C - A TYPICAL AUSTRALIAN HOUSE. Describe a typical Australian house. (You will be given details of a family who will allow you to inspect their house and ask questions.) Find answers to the following:

1. Who lives in the house?
2. How many people live there?
3. How many rooms are there and what are they used for?
4. What electrical appliances does the family have?

GROUP D - AS GROUP C

PROJECT 9: LEISURE - PART 2

AIM: To find how to spend leisure time outside Sydney and how Australians spend their leisure time. (Your class will be divided into four groups. You must then find the answers to the questions for your group.)

GROUP A - COUNTRY HOLIDAYS

1. How can you become a member of the Youth Hostels Association?
2. What is Y.H.A.?
3. What is a National Park?
4. Who controls them in New South Wales?
5. Do you have to pay admission fees for National Parks?
6. What is the closest National Park to the following?

BYRON BAY	MT KOSCUISKO
SYDNEY	KATOOMBA

7. Is camping allowed in these National Parks?
8. What facilities are provided?

GROUP B - RENTING A CAR. During the holidays you and your friends want to tour New South Wales by car. You estimate that you will travel 2,000 km. There will be six people altogether. Find out the cheapest cost for hiring a car. Estimate the cost per person per day for a period of seven (7) days. Find out also if you need any special documents, if you need any extra insurance and if the rental company places any special restrictions on the person who drives the car.

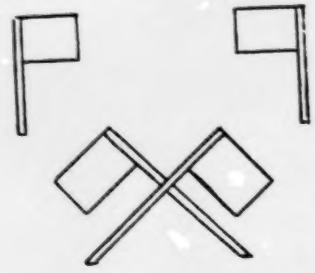
GROUP C - A BEACH

Go to the beach.

1. What were the people at the beach doing?
2. What are lifesavers?
3. Were any lifesavers there?
4. What do the flags on the beach mean in these two positions?

(a)

(b)



5. Are there any parking areas?
6. Are there any changing facilities?
7. What is prohibited on the beach?
8. Is food and drink available nearby?
9. What possible dangers are there in the water?

GROUP D - AUSTRALIANS AT LEISURE

1. What spectator sports are popular in Australia? (Use a weekend newspaper to help you).
2. What is the T.A.B.? What is a poker machine?
3. What is an R.S.L. Club? What is a Leagues' Club? How can you become a member?
4. What is a pub? When are they open? What is the legal drinking age?
5. What is a tavern? What is a wine bar?

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WATERLOO STREET : TV LANGUAGE SERIES FOR SCHOOLS
WHAT IS IT? WHO IS IT FOR? HOW IS IT USED?

*Howard Tucker and Barbara Harley

Waterloo Street is a series of twenty-four television programmes aimed at the multicultural classroom where language development and extension is needed. Though primarily intended for Years 5 and 6, experience has shown that there is a spill-over into the junior secondary and middle to lower primary areas.

Our first inclinations were to make a series of TV programmes which would provide a language resource for teachers of migrant children (ESL teachers) exclusively. But it soon became obvious that a series of programmes that attempted to 'teach' English at a set time each week could only attract a very small number of learners in classrooms where TV programmes are taken off-air, rather than recorded for later use. How many viewers would there be at 1.50 p.m. on a certain Tuesday afternoon in May who were at the right level of language acquisition to benefit from a programme illustrating the special habitual uses of the verb 'have', or 'what' as an interrogative adjective? A series that took a narrow structural approach to language learning could hardly have a wide popular appeal to teachers and pupils throughout the primary school.

While the problem of catering for migrant children was being examined, we began to receive requests for language resource material for native speakers of English. It seemed that the need for some kind of stimulating programme extended beyond the comparatively small numbers of ESL students. After much discussion and debate, we decided to make a series of programmes aimed at the general classroom, comprising both native speakers of English and second-phase ESL students. The 'second-phase learner' is defined as follows:

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* This information and advice for teachers was prepared by H Tucker, series Executive Producer, and B Harley, series Language Adviser.

- bilingual to a greater or lesser extent
- out of, or was never in, withdrawal classes
- may or may not have been born in Australia
- language experiences in English are largely confined to the school
- command of oral English appears adequate, but is limited in vocabulary, structures and flexibility
- comprehension is limited, literal and superficial
- lacks ability to manipulate the grammatical system
- has great difficulty in learning from written English and has difficulty in expressing himself in written English
- lacks the specialised language needed in subject areas, e.g. maths, social studies etc.
- may believe his English is adequate

It was obvious to us that some of these characteristics applied equally to Australian native-speakers and those for whom English is a second language. With such a wide target audience it was essential that the series found a suitable way of introducing language and communication skills: one that was capable of being followed up at a number of different levels, depending on the ability of the students.

The series follows a *functional* approach to language work. This approach was first developed in Europe in the early seventies when the twenty-one nations of the Council of Europe turned their attention to the problems of language learning.

The functional approach is basically a way of classifying language according to how, where, by whom and to whom it is used. The traditional grammatical approach has lost ground in recent years, and many teachers are experiencing problems in formulating a language programme to replace the old structured approach to language learning and use. The functional approach is one possible way of developing a language teaching programme for a class or school.

The functional approach views language primarily as communication. That is why the functions treated in the series all end in '-ing'; they are language *acts* - reporting, describing, apologising,

comparing, suggesting etc. Because of a basic stress on communication, language skills are recognised as not only productive, but also receptive and interpretative. Language is seen as not only words and rules for using them, but also intonation, stress, pause, facial expression, gesture, social rules and social roles. Because language is seen in the context of communication, the functional approach stresses that language teaching and practice must be in a true-to-life context, that the language used should be real, relevant to students' needs and practical and effective as communication. Language, therefore, should not be taken out of context and practised for its own sake - its relevance to communicative needs should be clear.

In this series, each programme is based on a language function. Once the function had been decided, a set of appropriate and relevant language patterns was chosen for use in the programme.

Language patterns, as the term is used in this series, are the expressions most commonly used in English when people are using a particular language function - when they are apologising, expressing regret, disagreeing etc. These language patterns are then focused on during the programme in two main ways.

1. A mini-drama in each episode presents the language patterns in a true-to-life context where the situation demands this language naturally. Here, as in real life, the language is embedded, and no attempt is made to stress it.

2. A studio segment where two presenters focus more directly on the language patterns through activities, games, sketches, songs, conversation, stories etc. The language patterns are still used in context, but the context is more circumscribed.

The functional approach used in this series allows for follow-up at many levels - from teaching new usage to the most sophisticated discussion of social issues.

The *benefits* for native speakers of English should be an expansion of linguistic options, an increased awareness of register and style*, an increased sensitivity to non-verbal cues, and a basis for the development of written language skills.

For students from a non English-speaking background there will be no unreal demand on productive skills, but an expansion of receptive and interpretative skills, an increased awareness of when and how to use the language they know, an opportunity to increase their communicative competence.

Some suggestions when using this series with learners of English:

1. Don't expect all students to understand every word spoken. 'Getting the gist' is an extremely important skill for the ESL student, and a strong visual context, non-verbal cues, and appropriate before-programme activities will all help to develop this skill.

2. Don't expect all students to be able to *produce* all the language patterns. In follow-up, focus on only those they are capable of handling. It is sufficient that they are able to respond or react appropriately when they hear the more complex ones.

3. Make extensive use of role-play in follow-up activities. Role play takes the scene out of the classroom, enables interaction with all kinds of people in a variety of situations, and keeps language in a real-life context - important in the functional approach.

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* Inappropriate register: child to teacher: 'Gimme me book back!' The child is using a playground register. More appropriate to the situation would be: 'Can I have may book back, please?' or 'Is it all right if I take my book now?' Innappropriate style: child writing in book: 'Captain Cook copped it in the Islands'. The child is using a colloquial style in formal written language.

4. Be prepared to *provide* children with the appropriate language, and to *guide* them in their choice of language patterns. Sensitivity to the appropriateness of *register* and *style* can only come through a wide exposure to a variety of contexts and situations.

5. *Prepare* students for the programmes carefully. Use the suggested before-the-programme activities, or devise some of your own. Alert students to the kind of language they are about to hear - for example talk about what it means to apologise, describe etc. Tell them the language patterns to listen for, perhaps write them on the board.

   Vocabulary is probably better treated after the programme - many words will be self-explanatory in context, and particular scenes can be referred to in talking about other words.

6. Language is used in every area of life, not just in the language lesson. Extend the use of the language patterns into other areas of the school curriculum - compare in maths, describe in geography, report in history, classify in science etc.

7. Don't expect the series to do what it is not intended to do, or to be what it is not intended to be:

   WATERLOO STREET IS NOT

   - a language course
   - setting out to teach language
   - intended for ESL beginners
   - intended for the exclusive use of ESL students
   - something to replace the teacher.

   WATERLOO STREET IS

   - intended for the multicultural school
   - intended for the general class

- intended for the class needing language extension
- a framework for looking at language
- a resource for the teacher to use in the teaching, consolidation, practice and extension of language and communication skills.

TEACHERS RESOURCE BOOK

In addition to the *Teachers' Notes*, a *Teachers' Resource Book* is being prepared and should be by now available for sale. The series is scheduled for replay during terms 2 & 3 in all States except South Australia. The 72-page book is intended to extend and develop the language patterns and general aims of each programme. It contains hundreds of suggestions for ways to use the programmes effectively, and the bulk of the book is devoted to activities carefully chosen to suit a wide range of language abilities. There are:

CARTOON STORIES - based on favourite characters in the series
LANGUAGE GAMES
SONGS
CRAFT IDEAS - recipes, models, mobiles etc.
BOARD GAMES - to cut out and make, as well as a variety of
IDEAS FOR ORAL AND WRITTEN EXPRESSION.

Many pages are specifically designed for teachers to reproduce and use with their pupils. The book will be available at $3.00 per copy, either from the Finance Department of the ABC offices in State capitals, or in person from the School Booklets Sections of the ABC Education Department in State capitals.

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'WHAT IS IT?' A MULTIPURPOSE LANGUAGE TEACHING TECHNIQUE

* Paul Nation. Reprinted from *English Teaching Forum*, XVI, 3, July 1978

What is it? It's interesting. It's easy to make. It makes your learners think. It's good for work in pairs, groups, or with the whole class. It gives each learner a chance to show his skill. It can be used for listening, reading, writing, or speaking. Do you give up? The answer is: my favourite teaching technique - the 'What Is It?' technique.

TEACHING THE SPOKEN SKILLS

Let's look at an example of this technique used as a listening and speaking exercise. First, the teacher thinks of something that his students know well, and he describes it:

It's *black and silver.*
It's *quite heavy.*
It's made of *metal and rubber.*
It costs *a lot of money.*
We can find it *on the roads.*
It has *two wheels and a motor.*
It's used for *going from one place to another.*
What is it?

When a student thinks that he knows what the teacher is describing, he raises his hand. He does not shout out. When the teacher reaches the end of the description, he asks one of the students who has raised his hand to name the object he has described.

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The teacher describes several things in this way while the students listen and try to guess the objects being described. Then the teacher writes an example on the blackboard, using the same sentence patterns as in the example above. He then gives another example to show that all he has to do is change the underlined words to make a new description:

It's *brown*.
It's *square*.
It's made of *wood*.
It costs *about fifty dollars*.
It has *four legs*.
We can find it *in a classroom*.
It's used for *writing , reading, and resting*.
What is it?

Having the Students Choose. Next, the teacher chooses something for the class to describe, and the students suggest substitutions in the model sentences on the blackboard to make a good description. When they can do this easily, the teacher asks one of them to think of something and then describe it by closely following the model on the blackboard. While the student describes the object, the teacher and the other students try to guess what it is. This is one of the good features of the 'What Is It?' technique: each student has the chance to possess information that the others in the class, including the teacher, do not have. The student knows what he is going to describe; the others do not. They must therefore listen carefully to his description in order to find out what it is. This puts the student in a superior position to the teacher and the other students in the class. In many classrooms this is a rare situation; usually only the teacher is in the superior position. The 'What Is It?' technique enables us to change this situation.

Providing Practice for Beginners. Even beginners can use the 'What Is It?' technique for language practice. The teacher puts the following simple patterns on the blackboard:

	a shop.	a neck.
We can find it in	a school.	a lid.
	a house.	a handle.
		It has four legs.
	silver.	four corners.
It's	brown.	numbers on it.
	colorless.	ink in it.
	black.	
		holding things.
	metal.	holding water.
It's made of	wood.	drawing.
	glass.	It's used for sitting.
		eating.
	big.	telling the time.
It's	square.	
	round.	
	long.	

On another part of the blackboard the teacher writes this pattern or puts up a chart containing pictures of the following things:

	a chair.
	a tin.*
	a ruler.
	a clock.
	a box.
	a pen.
It's	a glass.
	a blackboard.
	a table.
	a knife.
	a bottle.
	a pencil.

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* In American English, *it's a can* or *it's a tin can.*

The teacher also writes each noun in this pattern on a small piece of paper and distributes these among some of the students. One of the students then describes the object on his piece of paper by reading appropriate sentences from the patterns on the blackboard. The other students listen, and when the description is finished they read aloud the appropriate sentence from the last pattern, naming the object. Here is an example:

Student A: We can find it in a shop.#
We can find it in a house.
It's silver.
It's made of metal.
It's round.
It has a lid.
It's used for holding things.

Student B: It's a tin.

TEACHING VOCABULARY

The 'What Is It?' technique can also be used to introduce new vocabulary. Let's imagine that the teacher wants to introduce the word *stirrup*. He may describe it as follows:

A stirrup is silver.
A stirrup is strong.
A stirrup is made of iron.
A stirrup has a flat bottom.
We can find a stirrup on a horse.
A stirrup is used to put your foot into when you ride a horse.

When the teacher finishes his description he tells the students to try to translate the word into their mother tongue. (If there is no roughly equivalent word in the mother tongue, they can draw a picture or point to one of several pictures that the teacher may make available.)

In American English this would probably be *store*.

While describing a stirrup, the teacher repeats each sentence once or twice before going on to the next one. He also goes back and repeats the previous sentences several times before he reaches the end of the description. In this way the students will have heard the new word *stirrup* many times by the end of the description. They will also have listened with close attention because they want to discover what the new word means. Some teachers make the mistake of giving the meaning of new vocabulary too quickly. Once the students have been given the meaning of the word, they have no reason to pay attention any longer. Experiments on remembering (Jenkins 1974) have shown that recalling the *form* of a word (its spelling or sound) is more difficult than recalling its meaning. For this reason, techniques that give the student an opportunity for repeated attention to a new word *before* discovering its meaning are important for vocabulary learning. If the learners are asked to translate *stirrup* after listening to the description, this is in some ways the same as a direct translation where the teacher says, 'Stirrup in your mother tongue is_____'. But the differences are important: Direct translation is quick; the 'What Is It?' technique, involving the describing of the object before the learners are asked to translate, wastes some *teaching time*, but it makes valuable use of *learning time*. By listening to the description the learners have heard the new word several times, they have had to make an effort to get the meaning, and they have been active in telling the teacher what they think the translation should be (Nation, *English Language Teaching Journal*, forthcoming).

Limiting the Information. The order of the sentences in the 'What Is It?' technique is important if the teacher wants to keep the meaning of the new word away from the learners for as long as possible. The following example shows how this may be done. This time I will teach a technical word used in botany. As you read the description, make a note of the point at which you felt that you knew the common name for the technical word.

Brassicas are green.
Brassicas are made of leaves.
Brassicas have big leaves.
One costs about sixty cents.
We can find brassicas in most vegetable gardens.
Brassicas are round.
Brassicas are used for eating.
Many people cook brassicas before they eat them.

You should not have been able to guess that the new word *brassica* referred to cabbages, cauliflowers etc., until after you had read almost all of the sentences. So, in constructing a 'What Is It' exercise the teacher should make sure that the first sentences do not provide too much information. In this way he can give the students an opportunity to meet the new word several times.

Providing for Individual Work. The 'What Is It?' technique can also be used for individual vocabulary work, with the exercises on cards or in a book. Here is an example:

ONE MORE SENTENCE

From the five 'Missing Sentences' given at the end, find the one that belongs to each of the groups of related sentences. Write the number of the sentence and, next to it, the name of the object described in the group of sentences to which it belongs.

A farm is a big piece of land.
A farm is usually in the country.
Sometimes a man grows vegetables or rice on a farm.

A hen is a big bird.
We eat eggs from a hen.
A hen eats corn and other things.
A hen cannot swim.

A map is very useful.
A map is a picture of streets, roads, towns and cities.
A map shows us the hills, mountains and rivers.

A restaurant is a building.
A man sells food in a restaurant.
People can buy many kinds of food and drink there.

Sometimes a telegram brings good news.
Sometimes a telegram brings bad news.
We send a telegram at the post office.

The Missing Sentences

1. We use it when we want to know the way.
2. People go there to eat.
3. Sometimes a man keeps animals there.
4. People keep it and feed it.
5. It travels quickly through a wire.

This exercise may also be used to teach verbs, adjectives or adverbs; in that case the missing sentence has an empty space where the new word should be.

Introducing Vocabulary Incidentally. The 'What Is It?' technique can also be used to introduce new vocabulary incidentally. This often adds extra interest. For example, if the teacher is describing a *fork* in a listen-and-guess exercise, he might say:

It is silver. Silver is a color as well as a material.
Can you think of other things that are silver but are not made of silver?
It is long.
It usually has four prongs. Do you know what a *prong* is?....

The value of the 'What Is It?' technique in teaching vocabulary lies in the opportunity it provides the students to give repeated attention to the new word while requiring them to play an active part in discovering the meaning. It can be used in classes where English is the medium of instruction for subjects such as geography, mathematics and general science as well as in special ESL classes.

TEACHING THE WRITTEN SKILLS

The 'What Is It?' technique can be used in creating short puzzles to give practice in reading. The students read the description and respond by doing one of the following:

1. completing a sentence
2. writing a name
3. drawing a picture
4. choosing a name, picture or sentence from several given choices

Here is an example to illustrate these different kinds of responses: It is usually colorless and partly round. We can find it in houses. Every house has several of them. It is made of glass and metal. It shines when electricity passes through it.

1. We usually use it when _____
2. What is it?
3. Draw a picture of it.
4. It is a _____

cup pot bulb window

Providing for Individual Differences. It is easy to give useful composition practice in a class with a wide range of ability by using the 'What Is It?' technique. The teacher introduces the technique in the way described at the beginning of this article. Then he tells the students to write a description of something, using the model sentences that he has put on the blackboard and adding other suitable sentences if they can. In this way, the students who have only a little difficulty with English can add many sentences that are not based on the model; those who find writing difficult can use only the model sentences.

Even when learners describe the same thing and use only the model sentences it is unlikely that any of the descriptions will be exactly the same; the 'What Is It?' technique is a good bridge between strictly controlled composition and free composition. After the

students have written their compositions they can exchange them with other students in the class, who read them and try to guess what is being described. Composition work thus becomes a communicative activity.

Using Other Questions. There is no reason why the technique should be limited to the question 'What is it?' There are many other possibilities: 'What book or film is it?,' 'Who is it?,' 'What country or city is it?,' 'What animal is it?' Here are some examples of possible models (Nation, *Language Teaching Techniques*, forthcoming):

a. Each student describes one of his friends or a person that everyone knows:

He is about *thirty years old.*
He is *one meter eighty centimeters tall.*
He has *black* hair and *brown* eyes.
He is wearing *a blue shirt* and *black trousers.*
He is wearing *glasses.*
He is *carrying a bag / sitting near me.*
Who is he?

b. Each student describes an animal and the others try to guess its name:

It is *big.* It is *brown.* It has *four legs.* It has *horns.* It has a *long tail.* It does not have *wings.* It lives *in a field.* It can *give us milk.* It cannot *fly.* Its body is covered with *thick skin.* It is *tame,* so it is *not* afraid of people. What is it?

c. Each student chooses and describes a different country, city or place:

It has a *warm* climate. It has three *seasons*. They are *the wet season, the dry season and the cool season*. It is a *small* country. It has a *small* population. Many of the farmers in that country *grow rice/raise cattle*. It sells *wood* to other countries. It buys *cars* from other countries. It is part of *the Middle East/Asia/South America*. It is to the south of/near *the Indian Sea*. Its neighbors are *India* and *Burma*. The people there speak many languages. These languages are *Singhalese, Tamil* and *English*. The capital city is called _____. What country is it?

d. Each student has a different book and describes his own book:

Jane Eyre was written by *Charlotte Bronte*.
Charlotte Bronte lived *over a hundred* years ago.
She was *English*.
Jane Eyre is an *interesting* book. (Instead of *interesting* you can have *long, difficult, expensive, famous* etc.) It has a *hard* cover. It is *three hundred and twenty* pages long. It has *twelve* chapters. It has *many pictures (a table of contents, an index, some questions at the back)*. It has a *red* cover. There is *a picture of a girl* on the cover. It was first printed by *Oxford University Press in 1864*. It is a *love* story. It is about a *young girl*.

SUMMARY

The 'What Is It?' technique has many useful features:

1. It can be used to teach vocabulary and to give practice in listening, speaking, reading and writing.
2. It involves the students in meaningful communicative activity.
3. It gives each student a chance to be in a superior position as the source of information. Students performing are much more interesting than the teacher performing.
4. It can be used with classes containing students of widely differing achievement in English. It can also be used with beginners or advanced learners.

5. It requires little work from the teacher but a large amount of effort and attention from the students.

6. It can act as a bridge between controlled and free activities in speaking and writing.

7. It can provide challenging opportunities for attention to repeated material in listening, reading, and vocabulary-learning activities.

8. It is fun for both teacher and students.

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END OF COURSE EVENING CONTINUATION CLASS TEST

* F.J. Tyrrell

For some time now this new test has been available to students who have completed Book Three of *Situational English*.

However, before introducing the differences in the current test, it might be useful to look at what was used for many, many years.

Previously the test was in two sections - one a piece of reading comprehension, and the other a person-to-person oral test involving questions and directions. The comprehension exercise was, in fact, quite searching and was able to indicate the reading ability of the student reasonably well.

The oral segment was very artificial in so far as it was simply based on questions in isolation. Little conversation developed and probably the student was somewhat puzzled by the whole aim of the exercise.

To sum up, the old test lacked conviction. The student built up a mental picture of finally proving himself, only to be deflated by the brevity and shallowness of the test items.

The new test is far more realistic, issuing a better-balanced challenge to students. There are now five sections:

1. Listening Comprehension Test
2. Structure Test
3. Writing Test
4. Reading Comprehension
5. Oral Interview

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*Frank Tyrrell is an Advisory Teacher with Victoria's AMES.

Section One

The student listens to a passage which is on tape. He then chooses answers to multiple-choice questions in the test booklet.

Section Two

Some questions are multiple-choice and others are completion-type where the student must complete sentences with his own words. This is an important aspect of testing - recognising, and producing answers.

Section Three

Two picture series are presented to the student who is asked to write three or four sentences on each, telling the story behind each picture series.

Section Four

This section consists of one short reading passage. Following the passage there are five multiple-choice questions.

Section Five

Administered individually to each student. The three segments here allow for the development of a natural conversation because of the alternatives offered to the examiner.

IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTORS:

1. Teaching strategies must cater for *total* language development.

2. Students should not be presented for the test under-prepared. If students are permitted to take the test before attending for a reasonable period beforehand, the credibility of the test will be at stake.

3. Regular attendance of at least three months prior to the test should be a prerequisite.

4. The new test takes considerable time. Only small groups of five or six students can be examined by one person each night. Therefore Advisory Teachers require advance notice if suitable arrangements are to be made.

5. Requests for testing by an Advisory Teacher should be accompanied by the names of students taking part. Last-minute substitutions or additions are undesirable.

Finally, I believe that this test raises the whole tone of the occasion. Teachers and students are aware of the milestone that has been reached and have worked towards it conscientiously. Successful handling of the test leaves the student with a fine sense of achievement - a most necessary outcome, you'll agree!

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REPORT ON THE BRIAN ABBS WORKSHOP: ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN THE MULTICULTURAL CURRICULUM

* Jean Ireland

Three teachers from Adult Migrant Education had the good fortune to attend a five-day workshop (19-23 February) run by the dynamic Brian Abbs, co-author of *Strategies*, *Starting Strategies* and *Challenges*.

Comments from workshop participants indicated that they found the workshop practical and stimulating, and were fired with enthusiasm to try out new approaches in syllabus design, materials development and classroom techniques. With regard to the latter, the emphasis was on getting away from the teacher-dominated classroom by involving the students more, through lots of pair work and group work, and getting them to take more initiative than is usually the case. Further, teachers should be conscious of whether or not their methods have real effectiveness. A structure drill, for example, should not be practised in a monotonous, meaningless way. Instead, a real and interesting means of reinforcing a structure should be found, such as working with a partner through a questionnaire based on a particular tense. We should also try to avoid segmenting our lessons into ten minutes' writing etc., and aim at integrating the various skills more naturally. (This can be seen in *Challenges*.)

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* Jean Ireland is a teacher with AMES, Victoria.

The workshop was misleadingly entitled, there being very little time devoted to the 'multicultural curriculum'. The topics covered during the week were:

- communicative language teaching
- syllabus design (from both the thematic and functional points of view)
- selection and grading of functions
- authentic reading and listening materials, and how to exploit them
- study skills
- integrating language skills
- language across the curriculum

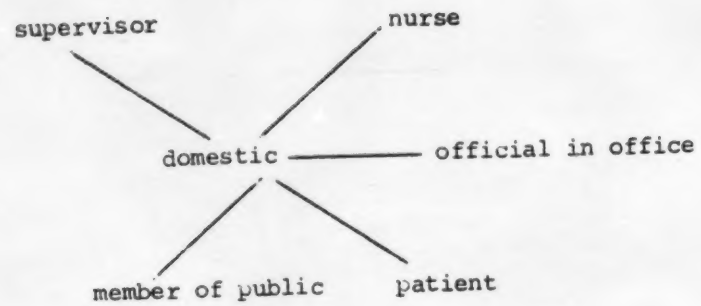
The broad topic of 'methodology and matter' was considered under the headings -

(a) how to teach
(b) what to teach
(c) from what to teach
(d) with what to teach
(e) selection and grading of functions

A 'function' can be defined as 'what the language is being used *for*'. For example:

Language	*Function*
I'm sorry	Apologising
Can I use your phone?	Seeking permission

In designing a function-based syllabus, the teacher must first isolate the students' language needs. This can be done by constructing a sociogram which shows the different people the student has to interact with. The example Brian Abbs gave was for Portuguese nursing aides (or domestics) in a London hospital, and looked like this:



Grading the functions is not such an easy matter, as the various work groups discovered!

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LABEL LANGUAGE

These are some new labels being stuck on medicine bottles. Unfortunately they do not reproduce well on a photocopier. I have collected several sets from various chemists. Alongside each label I have written in bigger and clearer writing the directions. Chemists say that people do not bother to read the labels - is it any wonder! There is a lot of language to discuss in these.

Caution. Do not use with other asthma sprays. Avoid prolonged or frequent use except on medical advice.

Discard contents after.

Do not take this medication with milk antacids or preparations containing iron.

R E F R I G E R A T E DO NOT FREEZE

> This medicine may cause drowsiness and may increase the effects of alcohol. If affected do not drive motor vehicle or operate machinery.

- Vera Foord, Williamstown, Vic.

POETIC PRACTICE

The following is an exercise that students may enjoy. It is a very simple writing exercise but results can be surprising.

French 'Cinquain' 5-line poem

Line 1.	one word	noun
2.	two words	adjectives
3.	three words	ending in -ing
4.	four words	
5.	one word	

e.g.

English
Difficult, necessary
Exhausting, frustrating, stimulating
I can enjoy it.
Sometimes!

- Shirley Martin, AMES, Vic.